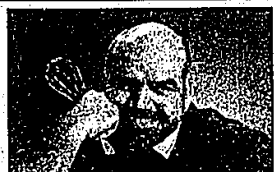


MONDAY, JUNE 22, 1992

TASTE

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TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JAMES

Amazing black beans becoming user friendly

When it comes to cooking dried beans, there is one that the James Gang prefers that is second to none in taste and versatility.

Check out my pantry and you're sure to find the rudimentary bag of navy beans that make for a hearty soup, the pinto that always end up in a home-cooked refried state but by far, the most widely used and adored are those tiny black "turtle" beans that end up in everything from a spicy Cuban black bean soup to an equally satisfying black bean pizza.

Dried beans

The demand for convenience foods made from dried beans has increased steadily while the use of fresh, unprocessed beans has declined, mainly because many homeowners work and have limited time for the preparation of meals at home.

In addition, money can be saved by buying dried beans. Not only do they store almost indefinitely, but each cup of dried beans will yield three times as much cooked beans.

Beans are becoming more "user friendly," especially since the introduction of a major on-line remedy called "Bean-O," which literally neutralizes the enzymes that produce flatulence.

Cooking methods

Dried beans have never been a major influence in creating culinary trends, probably because of the time involved for cooking.

There are, however, a few tricks that can be used in the kitchen to drastically reduce the cooking time involved for dried beans.

With the introduction of "soak" pressure cookers that are unlike the ones of old, beans can be pressure cooked in a matter of minutes.

I can vividly remember the day momma's old pressure cooker finally blew it's top, spewing beef stew farther than an active volcano. From that day forward, the James Gang dried beans were always soaked overnight. To us kids, it was an amazing sight to see that the dried beans had swollen to the top of the pot while we slept.

Of course, with the onset of hot summer weather, soaking might be preferred, but if you're in a hurry, there are alternatives.

My new pressure cooker will cook a pound of dried beans in less than 30 minutes. The pre-cooking process for soups only takes less than 10 minutes.

Prior to my purchase of a pressure cooker, other than the overnight soak, when I wanted beans, I remember momma's other secret, dubiously dubbed the "one-hour hot soak."

When the pantry was bare and there were no cans of kidney beans for the typical Thursday night chili, momma frequently used the one-hour hot soak method which required her to place the beans in a large pot and cover with what seemed to be a half gallon of water.

When the water began to boil, momma watched the second hand tick away for no more than two minutes. The burner was diffused and a tight-fitting lid was placed on the pot for an hour. Dinner might have been 45 minutes later that night, but the beans were as tender as ever.

Winning recipe

In addition to a hearty, stick-to-your-ribs black bean soup that is as out of place on a 50-degree day as an ice cream cone on Christmas, the James Gang has picked up another winning recipe for using black beans.

This is literally a "winning" recipe that was created by Dave Schmidt of Phoenix, Ariz., and which won him \$10,000 in the 1992 Pillsbury Bake-Off. In Dave's winning recipe, a refrigerated pizza dough is baked with a pizza-type top replete with black beans, fresh cilantro, plenty of vegetables and cheese.

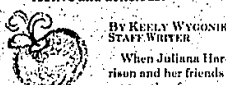
Dubbed as "vegetarian" because Dave "wanted a recipe that would appeal to people who are health-conscious" this black bean pizza would feel right at home with the addition of pepperoni.

If you want to taste the original, you might find yourself tempted to "switch" the bean variety because as Dave says: "the black beans are unusual and you get a unique flavor that piques people's interest." The recipe piqued Dave's interest too, by \$10,000. I've tasted winning recipes before but trust me on this one, folks, you won't be disappointed.

See recipe inside.



■ Several times over the summer, Juliana Harrison and her friends get together for a vegetarian cookout. The meals are festive and delicious.



BY KEELY WYONIK
STAFF WRITER

When Juliana Harrison and her friends get together for a cookout, the menu is nutritious, colorful and meatless.

"We've won people over," said Harrison who planned a festive Fourth of July Vegetarian Cookout with her friend Sarah Penberthy of Rochester Hills.

Both are vegetarians, that is vegetarians who eat no animal products. They don't eat meat, fish, dairy products, or white sugar. What is left is left to eat you might ask. Plenty I found out.

Harrison invited me to her home in Plymouth to try some of the recipes she and Sarah created, and to meet some of their friends who are also vegetarians. At one time, all of them were meat eaters. Some stopped eating meat for health reasons like Jeanne Poulet of Livonia. Others, like Harrison, Penberthy, and Mike Chindo of Plymouth, became vegetarians for ethical and environmental reasons.

"We have compassion for animals, and are making a large contribution to the environment," said Penberthy.

According to organizers of the recently launched "Beyond Beef Campaign," cattle and other livestock consume more than one-third of the world's grain



and are a major cause of deforestation. If this grain were fed to people, it would reduce the amount of malnutrition in the world.

The menu of red, white and blue corn chips, black bean dip, guacamole with salsa, Popeye Burgers, Barbecued Seitan with skewered vegetables, potato salad, colorful tossed salad, love crisps, rainbow crisp and cranberry kanten, was delicious, and satisfying.

Popeye Burgers, invented by Keith Zimmer of Milan, recently won high honors for low-fat burgers in a contest sponsored by Vegetarian Voice Magazine. Made out of spinach, chopped potatoes, and spices, these burgers are bursting with flavor. They're served on buns, just like hamburgers, and dressed up with sprouts, lettuce, tomatoes, mustard or barbecue sauce.

A vegetarian for two years, Zimmer said he did it in stages. First he eliminated fast foods, then beef, chicken, fish, eggs, milk and dairy products. "I enjoy cooking," he said.

Seitan, also called "wheat meat" books, and tastes like meat. "It has a nice chew to it," said Harrison. It's one of the convenience foods that makes being a vegetarian easier. You can buy it in health food stores, for about \$4.29

for 12 ounces. This will serve four.

"I've discovered how delicious natural foods are," said Penberthy who enjoys creating her own recipes. "You get a taste of what food is really supposed to taste like. It's pleasing to the eye and palate."

See recipe inside.



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BENDER

French version of pizza worth the effort to make

There are those people for whom the process of cooking is a real joy and an integral part of their life.

For Mary Breen, this week's Winner Dinner Winner, cooking is a passion. Originally from Buffalo, N.Y., Breen has lived in Farmington for 11 years. The mother of four grown children, she is enjoying having more time to pursue the other passion in her life, art. Breen has been taking classes at the Birmingham-Bloomfield Art Association. She was recently invited to enter the Celebrate Life art show at Congregational Church of Birmingham.

Having grown up with a mother who is a noted cook, it was only natural that Breen should follow suit. She has enriched her knowledge and cooking expertise by taking classes throughout the years, including many sessions at the Birmingham Community House. This past spring, she attended a five-day cooking school at the Greenbrier in West Virginia, sponsored by the world renowned French cooking school, La Varenne. The recipe for this week's Winner Dinner, the Pissaladiere, a Provencal version of pizza, she recommends serving the pissaladiere with a salad of mixed greens for a luncheon or light supper. The dessert should be a simple dish of fresh fruit.

Many thanks to all of you who have so thoughtfully shared your family's favorite summer menu.

Submit your recipes to be considered for publication in this column or elsewhere in Winner Dinner, P.O. Box 3504, Birmingham, MI 48012. All submissions become the property of the publisher.

Each week's winner receives an appointment with the weekly Winner Dinner Winner on it.

Winner Dinner:
Mary Breen (left) and her neighbor Elie Link enjoy Pissaladiere, the French version of pizza, mixed green salad, and brown sugar cookies.



OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC
Winner Dinner Recipes

PISSALADIERE BREAD DOUGH

2 teaspoons or 1/4 ounce package dry yeast
1/2 cup lukewarm milk
2 1/2 cups flour, more if needed
2 eggs
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon sugar
1/2 cup butter, softened
commeal (to coat baking dish)

In a small bowl, crumble or sprinkle the yeast over 3-4 tablespoons of milk. Mix in enough of the flour to make a soft, sticky dough and let this starter rise in a warm place for 15-20 minutes. Sift the remaining flour on a board or marble slab and make a large well in the center. Add the yeast starter, eggs, salt, sugar and the remaining milk. Briefly mix the center ingredients, then gradually draw in the flour to form a dough. Knead the dough into a ball; it should be soft but not sticky; so add more flour if necessary.

Knead the dough by lifting it up and slapping it on the work surface for 5-10 minutes until very smooth and elastic. Pound the butter to soften it, then work it into the dough. Knead the dough again to incorporate the butter thoroughly. Transfer the dough to an oiled bowl, cover it with a damp cloth and leave in a warm place to rise until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour. The dough will be easier to shape when chilled, and it can be left to rise overnight in the refrigerator.

Knead the dough lightly to knock out the air. Lightly flour the work surface, roll out the dough to a 14 inch circle. Roll the dough around the rolling pin and drape it over the buttered quiche pan or buttered cookie sheet which have been lightly coated with commeal. If using a quiche pan, gently lift the edges of dough with one hand and press it well into the bottom of the pan, pressing down to cut off excess dough. Press the dough evenly over the sides from the bottom to increase the height of the rim. If using a cookie sheet, pinch up the dough to form a collar all the way around the edge to hold the filling.

PISSALADIERE FILLING

1/2 cup olive oil
8 medium onions, sliced
3 tomatoes, sliced
8 ounce package mushrooms, chopped finely
3 cloves garlic, chopped finely
5 sprigs each parsley, thyme and rosemary, chopped

Heat 1/2 of the oil in a frying pan, add the onions with salt and pepper to taste and press a piece of buttered foil on top. Cover and cook until very soft, 15-20 minutes. Take off the lid and continue cooking, stirring until golden brown. In another frying pan, saute the chopped mushrooms, garlic, herbs and salt and pepper to taste in 1/4 cup of olive oil until tender. Spread onions on bottom of dough, then arrange tomato slices on top. Sprinkle herbed mushroom mixture on top. Let the pissaladiere rise in a warm place until puffed, 20-30 minutes. Heat oven to 400 degrees. Sprinkle tomatoes with salt, pepper. Bake 25-35 minutes.